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**On the cover...**Marble columns in the rotunda of the Mississippi State Capitol

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I Quit!

Have you ever felt this way? I know that I sure have. The pressure to succeed can be overwhelming. Sadly, so many teachers leave the profession after only a few years. One report that I read stated that forty-four percent of teachers leave the profession within the first five years. This is one of the many reasons why we truly need our tribe of teachers. I hope you have one. If you don't, I hope you will find one.

If you have been teaching for very long, you can probably recount numerous pieces of wisdom handed down from a veteran teacher. Are you now that teacher? If so, please “see” the new teachers in your school. Offer them words of encouragement that they so desperately need. Let them know they are part of a team that will help and support them to pursue excellence rather than perfection. Be honest about your own shortcomings. Let them know that you have been exactly where they are. They need to hear it.

Teamwork makes the dream work. I know... I know... How cliche’! However, I believe that if you take a look at successful schools around the country, teamwork might actually be the “secret sauce” holding it all together. Time and time again, research has supported the value of true camaraderie.

I am sure most of you have attended some sort of professional development on collaboration. Many schools utilize Professional Learning Communities to foster collaboration. Why is collaboration among teachers so important? Let’s be honest; teaching is too hard to go at it alone. We need feedback, advice, and sometimes, yes, a shoulder to cry on when things are just hard. Having a colleague to help analyze data or talk things through can be extremely beneficial. Having a teammate that will cultivate and celebrate excellence with you can mean so much.

As a word of caution, however, please do not use your PLC time as a time to complain. As educators, we understand the power of a positive mindset. We know this to be true in our classroom. I read recently that “Complaining doesn’t solve problems, it attracts them. The more you complain, the more problems you’ll have, and the more you infect other people with your problems.” Use your time together to laugh, cry, problem-solve, and share, but do not use your time to complain.

Now, I have to say that no one likes a friendly competition more than me. However, we are not in competition with our fellow teachers. I hope you are part of a team that shares lessons and works together on behalf of your students. The motivation to excel should drive you; however, this motivation should never come at the expense of your fellow teachers. You are on the same team!

In closing, please be reminded that you are not alone. In your teacher tribe, you can find a wealth of expertise at your disposal. Who knows? Perhaps teamwork really does make the dream work.
Kelly Riley

“All of these awards are outstanding and speak to the efforts of MPE to ensure that the ranks of educators continue to be improved and strengthened. Good job, MPE!!!”
– Email from a retired MPE member

I received the above email message in response to one of my weekly emails in October. That particular weekly email announced the recipients of our Non-Certified Scholarships and our Student Loan Contest. It also reminded members of the approaching application deadline for our NBCT Maintenance of Certification Scholarship. While many of our members join MPE for the professional liability protection, we strive to provide numerous resources to support our members throughout their professional growth journeys. As of November 1, MPE had provided $3,325 in NBCT Scholarships; $40,862 in classroom grants; $5,000 in Non-Certified Personnel Scholarships; and, $3,000 in our Student Loan Payment Contest – a total of $52,187 in support to our members.

We will continue to offer a number of resources this spring:

• We will award $500 Linda Anglin Teacher Preparation Scholarships to a student member in each of our state’s public and private teacher preparation programs.
• We will award $1,000 scholarships to up to twenty of our members pursuing graduate studies at a Mississippi university or college.
• We will award $500 scholarships to up to twenty high school seniors who have at least one parent who is a member of MPE.
• We are offering a NEW benefit for administrators that will benefit teachers. We will award $1,000 grants to up to twenty administrators or IHL/community college deans or department chairs, to motivate, inspire, reward, and encourage teachers and staff.

Visit the “MPE Grants and Scholarships” section of www.mpe.org for the guidelines and application for each of these scholarships. In addition to these scholarships, we will continue to offer our regional trainings on various topics. See page 21 for those training opportunities. Finally, we host our monthly forums on the second Tuesday of each month. Upcoming forum topics include “Educational Resources of Mississippi Museums,” “What Does it Mean to be a Title Teacher?,” and “Educators’ Rights Under the Education Employment Procedures Law.” I announce registration for these forums in my weekly emails.

A highlight of our MPE year is our annual symposium. As I shared in the fall issue of our MPE Journal, we are excited that Dr. Todd Whitaker will be our keynote speaker on Saturday, April 9, at the new Sheraton Flowood. Dr. Whitaker has written over fifty books, including the national best seller What Great Teachers Do Differently. This is always a great day of professional growth, networking, and fellowship. I hope you will plan to join us. Registration will open in January for MPE members.

The 2022 Regular Session of the Mississippi Legislature will convene at 12:00 noon on Tuesday, January 4, 2022. I spotlight the four legislators who chair the House and Senate Education and Universities and Colleges Committees in my legislative article on pages 12–14. We appreciate their service to our state.

As I write this article in mid-October, we are still confronting the pandemic and analysts are urging consumers to buy early for the holidays due to anticipated supply shortages. These are challenging times, but you, and thousands of other educators like you, are making a positive impact on students’ lives every day. Thank you for being a difference maker. As the classic song shares, “Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.” Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and best wishes for a healthy and peaceful 2022!
Mississippi Professional Educators will award up to twenty scholarships in the amount of $1,000 each to MPE members who wish to pursue graduate level studies at a college or university in Mississippi.

Eligibility requirements for the scholarship include:
• Applicant is a member of MPE
• Applicant will be under contract as a full-time educator in Mississippi during the 2022–2023 school year
• Applicant is accepted and enrolled in graduate coursework at a Mississippi college or university OR intends to enroll in such coursework if awarded a scholarship

For more information, visit www.mpe.org. Applications must be received in the MPE office by February 18, 2022.
Mississippi’s rise in student achievement, the most powerful lever for change has been Mississippi teachers. Not only do you bear the greatest responsibility for our students’ education, you deserve the greatest credit for their historic academic gains.

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) knows you cannot do this work alone. That is why we are investing our federal pandemic-relief funds in resources to support teachers and students inside and outside the classroom. Starting this spring and extending through the 2023–24 school year, schools can access high-dosage tutoring for their students. These services will include in-person or virtual tutoring for individual students or small groups and “vacation academies” for students who need intense interventions during times when school is not in session. Services will be provided based on grade bands such as grades K–2 and 3–12 and content areas including ELA and mathematics.

MDE is deploying more coaches to schools to support teachers. Along with our literacy, early childhood, and school improvement coaches, we now have twenty-two digital learning coaches supporting teachers in sixty-two schools throughout the state. The teachers receive weekly coaching conferences, classroom observations, collaborative lesson planning, modeling, and co-

teaching. MDE is hiring a team of math coaches to provide classroom-focused professional development and coaching for up to thirty schools serving students in grades K–8 starting in 2022.

We also have provided districts with a list of state-approved, evidence-based academic and behavior interventions. These interventions address the needs of in-person and virtual learners in Tier II or Tier III. The academic interventions aim to improve students’ deficit areas. The behavior interventions align with the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies identified by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and additional Mississippi State Board of Education-approved standards.

These additional supports are intended to help you and your students emerge from the pandemic stronger than you have ever been. I am proud of the way Mississippi students, families, school leaders—and especially teachers—have persevered through the challenges of COVID-19. As the world moves to recover, I am confident you will continue to guide your students to a successful future.
Since mid-July, it has been my pleasure to serve as Interim Executive Director of the Mississippi Community College Board. Even though I have been with the agency for more than thirteen years, I seem to learn something every day in this new role.

One of the main takeaways I have experienced is the fantastic work done at MCCB and each of the community college campuses. The jobs done each and every day by our educators, regardless of grade or level being taught, are amazing.

As each of you knows, access to higher education and earning degrees, certificates, or credentials is incredibly important to both the student and our state. With that in mind, MCCB has been working on two projects that help with both.

The first is an Ability to Benefit designation through the U.S. Department of Education. Earlier this year, Mississippi became the fourth state in the nation to allow students without a high school diploma to potentially receive federal student financial aid for enrolling in eligible career pathway programs at a Mississippi community college.

Under the plan, certain students who previously would not qualify for federal financial aid, including those without a high school diploma or its equivalent, may be eligible for these resources. This includes students enrolled in the Mississippi Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (MIBEST) program. MIBEST is available at all fifteen community colleges and enrolls those without a high school diploma into adult education and career/technical education courses. The result is students have the opportunity to earn a high school equivalency and other postsecondary credential in less time. MIBEST is funded through a partnership between the MCCB and W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Women’s Foundation of Mississippi, and the Mississippi Department of Human Services.

The second project is the re-vamping of the Complete 2 Compete program. You may recall that back in 2017 this program was unveiled by IHL, the Mississippi Association of Community Colleges, and MCCB to help adults who have completed some college but have not earned a degree. Since the program began, more than 1,000 associate and baccalaureate degrees have been awarded by community colleges and universities. The program paused because of COVID, but it has been restarted. In fact, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation has provided a $1.3 million grant to the program for students to use. This program will help those who began their post-secondary journey finish degrees. MCCB is proud to partner with IHL and MACC on this effort.

The 2022 legislative session is set to begin at noon on Tuesday, January 4, and conclude on Sunday, April 3. Budget priorities for the community colleges in FY 2023 include funds for salary improvements, increase in state support, and additional money for career and technical education programs. With the state once again collecting revenue above the monthly estimates, it is my hope that additional money will be available for our community colleges.

I appreciate your commitment to education and training to ensure Mississippi has the workforce needed to prosper. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!
The end of the fall semester is always a busy and exciting time, with a rush of activities as students and faculty anticipate the holiday break and look forward to little rest, relaxation, and time with family. This year, time for rest and rejuvenation is particularly important. There is no doubt that the past twenty months have been some of the most challenging times for higher education. However, despite the many challenges, there are many great things happening across Mississippi’s university system.

Since the summer, the system has received two important grants, including a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to help students return to finish their degrees and continued funding from AmeriCorps, the federal agency for volunteering and national service, for the America-Reads Mississippi program. America-Reads Mississippi will soon enter its twenty-third year of helping Mississippi children get their education off to a strong start and helping AmeriCorps members complete their educational goals of earning bachelor’s degrees.

The program equips “Tutors with a Mission” to implement research-based literacy interventions in a prescribed manner, dosage, and frequency. Since 1998, ARM has served in more than 241 schools, supported over 4,800 AmeriCorps members – many who’ve become certified teachers – and helped to improve the reading skills of many of the 59,400 students the program has served.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation recently awarded the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) $1.3 million to fund Mississippi’s Complete 2 Compete (C2C) Tuition Assistance Grant through 2023. Recipients will receive a $1,000 grant that can be renewed each semester and the funds can be used at any of the public universities or community colleges in the state.

The Complete 2 Compete program provides one-on-one support for adult learners who have earned college credits, but not a degree, and enables them to turn their deferred dreams of earning a diploma into reality. To qualify, students must not have been enrolled during the past two years and can use the funds to help pay for any remaining coursework needed to graduate or help repay prior debt to allow them to enroll again and graduate.

In October, members of the Board of Trustees, leaders from across the university system and the state, and members of the Jackson State University family gathered to celebrate the investiture of President Thomas Hudson.
The other day, I found myself watching *Freedom Writers* with several high schoolers who had to stay past our normal tutorial time. When Ms. G., the teacher portrayed by Hilary Swank, bought all her students journals and encouraged them to write out their truths, I overheard one student comment that was something Mrs. J…would do. Now, Mrs. J…is another teacher at my school, and the fact that one of her students said that is a true testament to her character.

As I sat there listening, I thought to myself that I used to be that teacher, the one who would buy composition books or encourage the kids to bring their own. I would saunter around the classroom laughing and talking with them about life, and sometimes even shedding a few tears. We were more than just student and teacher; we were a family, and I loved writing with them and sharing our truths. So, I asked myself, what happened? When did I lose that longing for discussion? When did I start preferring the comfort of my chair and computer screen to that of actual face-to-face discussion and class interaction? Was it COVID-19’s fault, virtual learning, or something else? I imagined there were many culprits, but at this moment, none of that seemed to matter. I just wanted to know where my former self went.

I’m fairly positive that I am not the only one feeling the “Winter Blues.” I have been teaching for over twenty years now, and I can still remember that first day in the classroom. I was eager to show my administrators and others that I could handle the job. I would work until 7 PM every day, grade every assignment turned in, and volunteer to help with everything. Most days now, I feel sluggish. I guess the point I’m trying to make is we, as educators, pour so much of ourselves into our students that we sometimes forget we need the occasional fill-up. This pandemic has been hard; working long hours with students has been hard; adjusting to face-to-face with no masks, then masks again, has been hard; and, learning to truly teach again face-to-face without a Zoom or simply posting a lesson has been hard. So, if you are one who has been feeling the “Winter Blues,” let me encourage you today as I encourage myself. Tomorrow is a new day, a new opportunity to shine, a time to regain what was lost.

The challenge to myself going into this new year is to truly teach with the same gusto and passion I felt before this world changed, to embrace my students and lift them up, and to also take time to high-five myself for every small step I make. I know some days won’t be easy, but I will just simply remind myself of one of my favorite Shel Silverstein poems:

“Listen to the mustn’ts, child. Listen to the don’ts. Listen to the shouldn’ts, the impossible, the won’ts. Listen to the never haves, then listen close to me… Anything can happen, child. Anything can be.”

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Gennella Graham, MPE Board of Directors
FRANCIS WINS STUDENT LOAN CONTEST

Congratulations to Kasey Francis for winning MPE's 2021 Student Loan Contest. A graduate of William Carey University, Francis is a kindergarten and first grade special education teacher at West Marion Primary School in the Marion County School District. She was selected as the winner via a random drawing of our First-Year Professional members. MPE will pay her student loans – up to $3,000 – for one year. MPE Executive Director Kelly Riley presented Francis with the “big check” made payable to her student loan provider in late October.

Kasey Francis (right) is pictured with her principal, Vicki Boone, who is also a member of MPE.

Attention MPE Members: Is your child a member of the Class of 2022?

MPE will award up to ten $500 scholarships to high school seniors who have at least one parent who is a member of MPE. Visit “MPE Grants and Scholarships” at www.mpe.org for the scholarship application and guidelines. Applications are due March 25, 2022, and we will announce recipients in April 2022.

EASLEY INDUCTED INTO JONES COLLEGE SPORTS HALL OF FAME

Mark Easley was inducted into the Jones College Sports Hall of Fame on September 9. He coached tennis for seventeen years and soccer for seven seasons at the college. Easley was a five-time Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges (MACJC) Coach of the Year, a five-time Mississippi Association of Coaches (MAC) Coach of the Year, and the 2015 Wilson/ITA Region 3 National Coach of the Year. He retired from coaching in 2016 when he became the college’s Dean of Student Affairs. After retiring from that position in 2019, Easley continues to work part-time at Jones where he also serves as the “Voice of the Bobcats” for the college’s football, basketball, baseball, and softball games. A member of MPE since 1990, he served as our association’s 1998–99 President.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT
Preparing for the 2022 Legislative Session

The 2022 Regular Session of the Mississippi Legislature will convene at 12:00 noon on Tuesday, January 4, 2022. This will be a ninety-day session, as it will be the third session of a four-year legislative term. MPE is providing the following information to assist you in monitoring legislative developments and contacting your legislators regarding critical legislation under consideration.

Committee Chairmen
Four legislators shepherd the bills assigned to the Education and the Universities and Colleges committees in both the Mississippi House of Representatives and the Mississippi State Senate:

- Senate Education: Dennis DeBar, Jr., of Leakesville
- Senate Universities and Colleges: Rita Parks of Corinth
- House Education: Richard Bennett of Long Beach
- House Universities and Colleges: Mac Huddleston of Pontotoc

These four leaders drive the legislative policy decisions that impact students in our state’s elementary through university classrooms, as well as educators and staff throughout the educational landscape. The Education Committees traditionally consider more bills than the Universities and Colleges Committees. An average of 205 bills have been referred to House Education during the past two legislative sessions, while Senate Education has averaged ninety-two bills. The House Universities and Colleges Committee has averaged thirty-five bills being referred to that committee for the same period, while the Senate Universities and Colleges Committee has averaged seventeen bills. The number of those bills passed into law is even smaller, with an average of twenty-two Education Committee bills and only two Universities and Colleges bills during the past two legislative sessions.

These four legislators have nearly half a century of combined service in the Mississippi Legislature. Representatives Bennett and Huddleston have served since 2008, while Senators DeBar and Parks were both elected in 2012. Chairman DeBar served four years in the Mississippi House before being elected to the Mississippi Senate in 2016. Representative Bennett has served as Chair of House Education since January 2018, while the other three assumed their chairmanships in January 2020. Representative Huddleston also chairs the House Ethics Committee. All four sit on their respective chamber’s Appropriations Committee, which adopts the state budget and determines funding for state services.

They have varying professional backgrounds. Senator DeBar is an attorney, as well as a member of the Mississippi National Guard. A former president of both the Long Beach School Board and the Gulf Coast School Board Association, Representative Bennett retired from Dupont. Senator Parks is a Quality and Regulatory Manager at a pharmaceutical distribution facility. Representative Huddleston flew helicopters in the Vietnam War and is a veterinarian, as well as a certified criminal investigator.
These four committee chairs shoulder their responsibilities with great diligence. MPE appreciates their service to the students, educators, staff and educational institutions of our state.

Dennis DeBar, Jr.
Senate Education
ddebar@senate.ms.gov

Rita Parks
Senate Universities and Colleges
rparks@senate.ms.gov

Richard Bennett
House Education
rbennett@house.ms.gov

Mac Huddleston
House Universities and Colleges
mhuddleston@house.ms.gov

(continued next page)
Timetable for Processing Legislation

Significant legislative deadlines for the 2022 Regular Session of the Mississippi Legislature include the following:

- January 17 - Deadline for introduction of general bills and constitutional amendments
- February 1 - Deadline for committees to report general bills originating in own house
- February 10 - Deadline for original floor action on general bills originating in own house
- March 1 - Deadline for committees to report general bills originating in other house
- March 9 - Deadline for original floor action on general bills originating in other house
- March 24 - Deadline to concur or not concur in amendments from other house to general bills
- March 26 - Deadline for conference reports on appropriation bills to be filed
- March 28 - Deadline for adoption of appropriation conference reports and for conference reports on general bills to be filed
- April 3 - Sine Die

MPE Legislative Resources

As in years past, MPE will keep our members updated throughout the session via our weekly email updates, as well as Facebook and Twitter (@MSProfEd). MPE staff will develop our bill tracking spreadsheet of the bills we will be monitoring throughout the session after the February 1 committee deadline. We will post an updated tracking sheet in the “Legislative News” section of our website (www.mpe.org) each Friday. You may also monitor developments on individual bills under consideration via the Mississippi Legislature’s website at www.legislature.ms.gov.

It is important for educators to contact their respective state senator and representative to share their thoughts and comments on legislation that is being considered. The “Legislators by School District” page of our website (www.mpe.org) allows you to identify legislators by school district. You may click on a respective school district and then see the state representatives and senators whose legislative districts include the respective school district. Contact information is provided for each legislator, as well as Facebook and Twitter links when applicable. Contact information for statewide officials is as follows:

- Governor Tate Reeves: governor@govreeves.ms.gov, 601-359-3100 or 601-359-3150
- Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann: ltgov@senate.ms.gov, 601-359-3200
- Speaker of the House Philip Gunn: pgunn@house.ms.gov, 601-359-3300

MPE’s Find Your Voice: MPE’s Legislative Advocacy Guide for Educators shares resources and best practices for Mississippi educators to use while monitoring events at our state capitol and encouraging their legislators to make the best decisions for public education students and educators throughout our state. The guide is available via the “Quick Links” section of our website.
We would like to recognize the following ten members who have already earned a free membership for their recruitment efforts during the first quarter of this year:

Stephanie Clausel, Blue Mountain College
Erin Fortenberry, North Pike School District
Dr. Tracey Gregory, Belhaven University
Dr. Brad Johns, Rankin County School District
Charles McClatchy, Sr., Marshall County School District
Stacy Reeves, University of Southern Mississippi
Amy Rutland, Brookhaven School District
Nicole Spinks, Delta State University
Heather Turner, Greene County School District
Devin Walsh, Lamar County School District

Recruitment Incentives

MPE’s recruitment incentives provide a great way for you to earn a free membership, as well as a little extra money. You earn a free year’s membership for simply recruiting five new members and you earn money for each new member recruited after five. Encourage your professional co-workers and friends to join the premiere organization for professional educators in Mississippi.

- Five new members = one year’s free membership
- 6-9 new members = one year’s membership + $10 per member*
- 10-14 new members = one year’s membership + $15 per member*
- 15+ new members = one year’s membership + $20 per member*

You will receive $5 per student member recruited.

Recruitment bonus checks will be awarded at the end of each quarter, with the first quarter beginning July 1 and ending September 30. Credit will be given for each new member who joins or re-joins** between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022. Free memberships will be credited towards the next year’s membership.

* credit will be given for each additional member after five
** member must have previously been made inactive for a period of three months or more
FOUR MISSISSIPPI SCHOOLS EARN NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON HONORS

The U.S. Department of Education has recognized four Mississippi schools as National Blue Ribbon Schools for 2021. They are among 325 schools honored nationwide for academic excellence. The recognition is based on a school's overall academic performance or progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups. The four schools earning the national distinction for exemplary high performance are:

- **Brandon Elementary**, Rankin County School District
- **Della Davidson Elementary**, Oxford School District
- **East Hancock Elementary**, Hancock County School District
- **Woolmarket Elementary**, Harrison County School District

Congratulations to these school families and their communities!

MEMBERS EARN ADVANCED DEGREES

Melissa Bufkin graduated in August with her Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from William Carey University. She serves as Federal Programs Director, Early Childhood, Curriculum and Gifted Coordinator for the Jones County School District. Melissa also serves as our District 5 representative on the MPE Board of Directors.

Keila Glenn, NBCT, graduated in July from Trident University International with her Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership. She teaches third grade gifted in the Tupelo Public School District. She has been a member of MPE since 2014.


Laurie Stewart, a kindergarten teacher at Oak Grove Primary School in the Lamar County School District, graduated in May from William Carey University with her Master’s in Mild and Moderate Disabilities. She joined MPE in 2011.

Leah Todd was awarded an Educational Specialist degree in School Administration from Mississippi State University this past August. An English teacher at West Lauderdale High School in the Lauderdale County School District, she joined MPE in 2007.

Amanda Tucker with the Nettleton School District became a Certified Academic Language Therapist (CALT) through the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA) in December 2020. She has been a member of MPE since 2015.

MPE MEMBERS APPOINTED TO LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Dr. LaTanya Gaines-Herrington has been appointed to serve as the Instructional Coach for the Department of Special Services in the Jefferson County School District. She has been a member of MPE since 2008.

Laverne Sanders is the new Student Services Coordinator for the Holly Springs School District. She has been a member of MPE since 2002.

Nicole Spinks has been appointed Coordinator of Elementary Education for Delta State University’s Division of Teacher Education, Leadership, and Research. Nicole also serves as our District 3 representative on the MPE Board of Directors.

MPE MEMBERS APPOINTED TO LEADERSHIP POSITIONS
MPE AWARDS NBCT SCHOLARSHIPS

MPE awarded $475 scholarships this past September to the following members who are beginning their National Board Certification journey:

- McKensie Blackwell, Wayne County High School, Wayne County School District
- Amy Davis, Saltillo Primary School, Lee County School District
- Stephanie Howard, Oak Grove Middle School, Lamar County School District
- Richard Jones, Pearl Upper Elementary, Pearl Public School District
- Andrea McSwain, Perry Central High School, Perry County School District
- Carmen Lynch, Woodley Elementary, Hattiesburg Public School District
- Amanda Parker, North Pike Upper Elementary, North Pike School District

MPE AWARDS NON-CERTIFIED PERSONNEL SCHOLARSHIPS

We recently awarded $1,000 MPE Non-Certified Personnel Scholarships to the following five members:

- Natasha Harper, Crossroads Elementary, Harrison County School District
- Kara Kidd, Clarkdale Elementary, Lauderdale County School District
- Latorya Loftin, Flowood Elementary, Rankin County School District
- Robby Webb, Maintenance Department, Jones County School District
- Haleigh Wilkins, T.J. Harris Lower Elementary, Meridian Public School District

We are honored to support these members as they pursue their undergraduate degrees. Congratulations to all!
MPE invites its members to apply for classroom grant funding each year to try out a new idea or buy the “extras” for an already great lesson plan or project. Forty-one members received grants of up to $1,000 for their class projects and instructional program. We are pleased to spotlight several of the grants below for your enjoyment, as well as your reference for ideas for your own classroom.

**Jennifer Cottrell**  
**CARES School of Hattiesburg**  
**Tortoise in the Classroom**

The students and staff are very appreciative of the engaging learning experience that was provided to our students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Intellectual Disability at CARES School Hattiesburg through the funding of our classroom grant request by MPE. By providing our students with a pet turtle, supplies to care for his basic needs, and books about turtles and tortoises, the students at CARES School Hattiesburg were able to learn how to care for their new pet responsibly through shared reading experiences and science activities in the classroom. They were also able to work on strengthening fine motor skills by using a variety of tools to create different types of turtle art that were supplied through the art kits that were purchased as part of the grant. Thank you so much for providing our students with a meaningful learning opportunity that made re-entry into the classroom after COVID an easier process for our students.

**Karen Cook**  
**Houston Career & Technology Center**  
**Animal Health Applications**

Thank you MPE for funding the classroom grant that helped provide hands-on laboratory activities and equipment for the AEST Animal Science II class. These activities and equipment helped my students gain new career skills that will help them in the animal science career field. Since many of my students are interested in the veterinary science career field, the lab kits that were purchased helped my students learn the importance of vaccinations and how to prevent animal diseases, identify practices that promote animal health, and how to administer medicines through injections.

**Amber Combs**  
**Franklin County Middle School**  
**Counseling with Ceramics**

Thank you MPE for providing the materials and resources to enhance and broaden my counseling program! With these funds, I was able to purchase pottery wheels and supplies to implement pottery/ceramics into an already fundamental art therapy program. The majority of the students had never before had the opportunity to create with clay. The “Counseling with Ceramics” sessions provided a safe space for students to be creative and relaxed. The students stated that working with the clay was very calming and creating something helped make them feel accomplished and proud of themselves.
Melanie Broom
Pearl River Central Elementary
Listening Center
Thank you, MPE, for awarding me a $1,000 classroom grant! With the money, I was able to purchase the materials needed to set up a listening library in my classroom. This included the purchase of nineteen sets of read-alouds and a CD player with Bluetooth. The kindergarten students in my classroom have thoroughly enjoyed listening to the audio version of these books and using these stories to work on many ELA standards. It has been wonderful to see my students get so much joy out of the use of this center. Thanks again, MPE!

Mandy Upton
D’Iberville High School
Digital Art in the Advanced Art Program
MPE, you are awesome!!! We want to thank for your generosity and supporting the visual arts. My Advanced Placement 2-D Design and Drawing Art program is three years old now and we were struggling with digital technology for making art. Thanks to MPE we were able to get IPads, Apple Pencils, cases, programs, and a few other technology items. Exceptional learning can happen with or without advanced technologies, but with resources available it can increase student experiences and give them a better understanding of each medium. This has been a great experience for all my art classes. Thanks again MPE!

Tonya Saksa
East Central High School
All Glazed Up and No Place to Shine
I cannot thank MPE enough for the grant that provided funding for additional ceramic supplies for our Chinese lantern project. The beauty of the ceramics material is that it will not only allow students to use it to glaze their lanterns, but it will also add to the materials in our ceramics supply closet. Ceramics students will be able to utilize the glaze, clay, and tools this grant has provided for many more projects. Properly stored, these glazes will even be able to be used next school year!

Melinda Lowe
MS University for Women
3Doodler
Thank you, MPE, for funding the classroom grant that provided our preschool students at The Child and Parent Development Center (CPDC) at Mississippi University for Women the opportunity to experiment with collaborative art projects within their classrooms. STEAM in Action with 3Doodlers accomplished the following goals:

• Science: The science portion of the 3Doodler project encouraged children to investigate and experiment with new mediums.
• Technology: Technology is sometimes difficult to incorporate correctly with young children. 3Doodlers allowed children to use a more complex tool.
• Engineering: We used the 3Doodler to discuss mechanical engineering and using the electronic power to build, create, and engineer new designs. We also worked on fine motor skills and concentration when testing solutions to make new designs.
• Arts: 3Doodlers allowed our children to utilize a large amount of creativity and freedom.
• Mathematics: The project allowed us to use organizational skills, patterns, sequencing, and planning. Through the grant, I was able to purchase eighteen 3Doodler pens, 3000+ multi-color filament strands, and multiple 3Doodler resources to support the children as they develop fine motor skills through their collaborative 3Doodler art projects.
MPE CONGRATULATES NEW MTAC MEMBERS

MPE congratulates the following twenty-one members who were among the forty-nine educators selected in August 2021 to join the Mississippi Teacher Advisory Council (MTAC). The MTAC was formed in 2016 to provide feedback to State Superintendent Dr. Carey Wright on the initiatives of the Mississippi Department of Education, the Mississippi State Board of Education, and the Mississippi State Legislature.

Lindsey Martin, Rankin County
Gwen Anne Merrill, Petal
Della Morgan, George County
Ashley Nash Moton, Tupelo
Shanna Nesser, Petal
Jacqueline Shirley, New Albany
Stephany Watson, West Point
Angie Wilkinson, Lauderdale County
Jennifer Wilson, Gulfport
Lori Wilson, Madison County

MPE AWARDS CLASSROOM GRANTS

The Mississippi Professional Educators (MPE) recently awarded classroom grants totaling nearly $41,000 to the following forty-four members. Our classroom grants assist our members in trying out a new idea or buying resources and supplies for a great classroom lesson or project. We are honored to support our members and their students with these grants. Congratulations to all!

Rebecca Bradley, Long Beach
Kristy Brannon, Vicksburg-Warren
Eric Bridgett, North Bolivar
Kayla Brown, Pontotoc County
Janie Brown, Laurel
Michael Burkett, Biloxi
Robin Craft, Bay St. Louis-Waveland
Emily Edgar, Lowndes County
Blakely Fore, Biloxi
Jaleesa Mackey, Oxford
Misty Wright, South Panola

Julie Ingram, The Learning Center
Richard Jones, Pearl Upper Elementary
Stacey Jules-Dunn, Oak Forest Elementary
Sharon Kelly, Pearl River Central Middle
Takiya Lewis, Booker T. Washington Elementary
Christopher Little, Jim Hill High School
Brianna Mabry, Senatobia Elementary and Middle
Kris Morris, McLaurin High School
Cecil Murphy, St. Martin Middle
Beckie Nieman, North Pike Elementary
Carly Parker, Harper McCaughan Elementary
Ryan Reese, Byram Middle
Misty Robinson, Fairview Attendance Center
Mollie Rushing, Hayes Cooper Center
Charlene Seabrook, Sylva Bay Academy
Ashley Smith, Glade Elementary
Stephanie Stringer, Columbia Primary School
Natalie Sumrall, Petal High School
Sherri Turnage, Columbia Primary
Sarah Williford, Hayes Cooper Center
Donna Wilson, Sacred Heart High School
Christy Wise, North Pontotoc High School
MPE Regional Training

MPE is pleased to offer the following virtual and in-person regional training sessions. Participants will receive .6 CEU credits for completing each course. Each session’s content is timely for educators during the 2021–2022 school year. All sessions and CEUs are free for MPE and MS NBCT Network members. Non-members must pay $25 to attend, which includes CEUs. All participants attending the virtual sessions must have a device with sufficient internet connection, camera, and audio capabilities.

ESSENTIAL TOOLS FOR THE VIRTUAL TOOLBOX: This session will provide participants with web-based tools to create meaningful learning experiences for students in remote situations. Participants in this interactive and engaging virtual workshop will get hands-on experience using the essentials for every teacher’s toolbox. The websites, apps, and Chrome extensions (Flipgrid, Seesaw, Book Creator, Wakelet, etc.) that will be explored are effective learning tools that promote the C’s in traditional, blended, or completely remote learning environments. For optimal workshop experience, participants should use a device bigger than a tablet. All participants must have a device with sufficient internet connection, camera, and audio capabilities.

- January 21, 2022
  MSU Riley Center, Meridian
  Time: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- February 8, 2022
  Thames Center, Wesson
  Time: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- February 15 and 17, 2022
  Zoom Meeting
  Time: 4:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

WRITING EFFECTIVE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PLANS: The 2020–2021 school year required exceptional education teachers to step out of their comfort zones to learn new ways of teaching and learning. The IEP is the beginning point of determining the personalized plan for exceptional students. This high-impact session will center around writing effective IEPs to ensure success for all. Participants will engage in hands-on activities around the eight components of an IEP while utilizing a framework to design a quality IEP with the appropriate accommodations and modifications.

- January 19 and 20, 2022
  Zoom Meeting
  Time: 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

LEARNING AND BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM AND DYSEXIA: Mississippi schools are charged with the responsibility of educating students who require a plethora of unique strategies to address a wide range of learning challenges. Some of the most frustrating and misunderstood of these are dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, and dyspraxia. This session will investigate effective teaching strategies for students that present with a complex clinical picture due to a convoluted diagnostic and educational ruling profile. Participants will be guided through a discussion that considers the challenges that a student may experience from the student’s point of view, the teacher’s point of view, and the point of view of the student’s peers.

- January 24 and 26, 2022
  Zoom Meeting
  Time: 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
- February 11, 2022
  William Carey University, Tradition Campus, Biloxi
  Time: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION: Rooted in the research of Dr. Carol Tomlinson, this training will provide both the conceptual foundation and practical tools for the professional application of differentiated instruction. Participants will explore several research-based differentiated practices, including continual assessment, flexible grouping, and “teaching up.” Teachers will be provided with examples of instructional strategies and resources that they can immediately adapt in their own classrooms to scaffold learning and promote growth in every student.

- January 27, 2022
  Hancock Leadership Center, Tupelo
  Time: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- January 31 and February 3, 2022
  Zoom Meeting
  Time: 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
- February 18, 2022
  Natchez Grand Hotel, Natchez
  Time: 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- February 22 and 24, 2022
  Zoom Meeting
  Time: 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

To register, go to www.mpe.org, click on the “MPE Regional Trainings” tab, and then click on the training you wish to attend or scroll down to locate the MPE calendar and click on the training hyperlink. All virtual training participants will receive a Zoom invitation via email and/or login information prior to the training. You must attend both virtual sessions to receive CEUs. All in-person participants must complete the full day of training to be awarded CEUs.
In Mississippi, National Board Certified Teachers can earn an additional $6,000 – $10,000 per year!

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* Increase student learning
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Please join us for MPE’s 2022 Best Practices Symposium featuring Dr. Todd Whitaker, author of *What Great Teachers Do Differently*. Other titles include: *Dealing With Difficult Teachers*, *Ten-Minute Inservice*, *Your First Year*, *What Great Principals Do Differently*, *Motivating & Inspiring Teachers*, and *Dealing With Difficult Parents*. Recognized as a leading presenter in the field of education, his message about the importance of teaching has resonated with hundreds of thousands of educators around the world.

The day’s agenda and additional details will be announced in December. Priority registration will open for MPE members in January. Registration will open for non-members in March, if space allows. Mark your calendars now and plan to join us on April 9!

Engaging Speakers  Legislative and budget news  Great door prizes  CEUs

Registration opens in January for MPE Members!

Saturday, April 9, 2022
The Refuge Conference Center
Flowood, MS

SAVE THE DATE!
Your MPE membership includes...

- Professional liability protection of $2,000,000 with $3,000,000 maximum
- Legal assistance related to employment or professional matters per MPE policy
- $10,000 accidental death & dismemberment coverage
- $2,500 assault related property damage
- Consistent and economical dues—MPE has not increased dues in 13 years
- Identity theft coverage
- Graduate & undergraduate scholarships awarded annually
- NBCT scholarships awarded annually
- Classroom grant opportunities awarded annually
- Non-certified personnel scholarships awarded annually
- Student loan payment contest
- High school senior scholarships
- Free regional trainings offering CEUs to members at no cost
- Unlimited professional advice available 24/7
- Brightview Credit Union membership
- MPE Journal published three times per year
- Staff monitors legislation at the state capitol, with weekly updates provided to membership
- Every dollar of your dues stays in Mississippi for your benefit! MPE does not support political candidates.

Optional group discounts...

- Working Advantage discount program
- Long-term care coverage
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